"A political compromise," I interrupted him, "is no business of the military. But you are right, there will be no shooting on your positions. If the mutinous regiments push that far, they will meet our troops some twenty miles before they get to your line."

The general looked at me incredulously. "Then you will have a front of fifty miles to cover. How will you man the lines?"

"Do not expect us to inform you of our operations," I replied.

The general looked sheepishly at his map.

The Special Commission met for a brief session. Organization of the defense was progressing smoothly. The defense line we had planned outside the city was divided into sections, each assigned to a definite group of regiments and factories. Young officers loyal to the Soviets were sent to select and organize positions. Workers and soldiers were ordered to dig trenches. Before noon, more than a hundred thousand workers had enrolled for action.

There were rumors of secret meetings of counterrevolutionary elements. The Commission sent detachments of soldiers to arrest the suspects. Somebody proposed freeing Trotsky and other Communists taken into custody after the July days. I pointed out that their liberation might be interpreted by the public as evidence that we could not defend the capital without them. The proposal was withdrawn. The patrols brought the suspects to the Smolny. A group of lawyers (all servicemen) were assigned to interrogate them and set free those against whom no serious charges were presented. Stern orders were sent to the barracks to deliver all suspects to the Special Commission, the only body authorized to investigate the charges.

By the morning of September 11, all roads leading to the capital from the west and south were occupied by our troops and armed workers' commandos. By noon, activity in the Smolny began to subside. The offices of the Soldiers' Section were half empty. A few members of the Special Commission slept peacefully beside silent telephones. I began to think of returning to the front, but the transportation section of the Executive Committee warned me that both the railroad and highway between Petrograd and Pskov were in the hands of the rebels.

In the evening the Petrograd Soviet convened in the main hall of the Smolny. Fewer than half the delegates were present, for the others were busy in positions encircling the city. Since there was no quorum for a formal session, it was decided to hold an informal conference. Chkheidze asked me to report on the fall of Riga and the military situation on the Northern Front. The Soviet was dominated by left-wing Socialists, and I was not very popular with them. Yet the audience greeted me with a long ovation, probably as a tribute to the Twelfth Army and my telegrams from the front. My talk was